

the only shrubs present are *Euonymus japonicus*. Butterflies were in attendance at all of the *Euonymus* bushes, and were observed frequently to settle on the old, dead flowers. Subsequent examination confirmed that eggs had been laid at the base of the green, newly formed seed capsules, in the angle made between these and the sepals. Only one egg per seed capsule was noted. Shortly after this confirmation had been obtained, a female *argiolus* landed about two feet away from me and promptly deposited an egg as I watched!

It is perhaps worth considering whether *Pyracantha* and *Euonymus* have always been alternative foodplants of this butterfly and, indeed, if others remain to be discovered. The Aquifoliaceae (holly) and the Celastraceae (*Euonymus*) are closely related families of plants and are listed consecutively in *Flora of the British Isles* (Clapham, Tutin and Warburg, Cambridge University Press, 1962). Both flower at roughly the same time and so both are available to the first brood adults. *Symphoricarpos*, another recorded foodplant for the progeny of the spring brood is, on the other hand, in an unrelated family, the Caprifoliaceae. *Pyracantha* belongs to the Rosaceae, and so is quite unrelated to ivy (Araliaceae), though both flower at a later time of year, and roughly at the same time as each other. Dogwood, another recorded foodplant, is in the Cornaceae, which immediately precedes the Araliaceae in *Flora of the British Isles*.

At its more usual low density, the Holly Blue attracted little attention other than from a few enthusiastic researchers. It is quite possible that it has simply not been looked for on plants other than those which the text books tell us it is allowed to be found on. Added to this is the fact that there are certainly a great many observations made by a great many, exceedingly good, field naturalists which never end up in print because the observer "didn't think it was all that important". On the other hand, in times of abundance — such as the present — one may expect foodplant availability to decline through increased competition (itself a well-known population controlling factor). In such a situation the butterflies may be expected to exploit alternatives though these may perhaps be expected to be closely related species of plant (?). It would be interesting to "pool" observations and I would be pleased to receive unpublished information on this subject area to collate into a more comprehensive account.— COLIN W. PLANT, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LZ.

Hazards of butterfly collecting — Kakamega, Kenya, 1988.

In the tropics many butterflies forsake the usual nectar in favour of less savoury foods. On my first visit to the Kakamega Forest in Kenya, the most eastern true rainforest in East Africa, the first sight that greeted me was a horde of butterflies sitting on the road. They turned out to be feeding on the exposed, squishy viscera of a civet which had been squashed by a truck



Enjoying a dead chameleon.

earlier in the day. It would have been possible to spend the entire day intercepting ever more butterflies, although the smell was not yet powerful although enough to bring in the large and beautiful *Charaxes*, which are attracted to rotting meat, shellfish, and excrement. As it is, I now have a portfolio of gory pictures depicting more than a dozen species feeding on the hapless civet.

Older butterfly books from Africa and Asia take this penchant for malodorous feeding most seriously. "The *Charaxes* are especially attracted to the droppings of the big cats", intones one author, adding "but always take great care to ensure that the great cats are no longer in the vicinity". And it is true; fresh leopard droppings can attract hordes of butterflies from miles around. Another author finds that the exposed viscera of rats are useful collecting tools: "I always carry a dead rat or two wherever I go".

Carnivore excrement can be a strong attractant to butterflies, even that of quite small animals like mongooses (mongeese?), civets, genets and monkeys. Herbivore excrement is usually less favoured, though I have sometimes seen hordes of swallowtail butterflies on still steaming piles of elephant dung. One paper on Cameroun butterflies comments in some detail on the fact that butterflies were attracted to the faeces of the European entomologist, but not to that of his African camp staff (which to my mind implies that he allowed them poor rations without sufficient meat).

Urine can be good too, sometimes exceptionally so, but success is somewhat intermittent for reasons I cannot understand. I have sometimes

had spectacular success, not least in Papua New Guinea and Ecuador, while at other times it holds little excitement. Rotting fruit is another standby for many butterflies, some of which rarely or ever visit flowers. Just as the Red Admirals (*Vanessa atalanta*) of Europe, they often get so intoxicated that they cannot fly straight, or indeed not fly at all.

One benefit to the entomologist of these feeding habits is that some butterflies, which are otherwise almost impossible to find, can be trapped. The traps are simple, consisting of a tube of mosquito netting with a narrow gap at the bottom. They are baited with rotting crabs or fermenting bananas, and suddenly butterflies appear as if by magic. The first time I used traps, I had more specimens of *Charaxes* in one trap than I had caught during three weeks of conventional collecting. For some reason the traps never seem to get stolen, even where many people are about, possibly because they are considered some sort of *juju* (magic).

The need to carry foul substances sometimes leads to awkward situations. I had a suitcase which for several years in damp weather still smelled of a mixture of palm wine and fermenting banana, a bottle of which had literally exploded due to my carelessness in not relieving the pressure before setting out on a trip. I would have liked, though, seeing the face of the unknown miscreant in Kenya, who made off with two Johnny Walker bottles full of urine from my car, when he took the first tot on arriving home!—TORBEN B. LARSEN, 358 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8PL.

***Cercyon bifenestratus* Küster (Col.: Hydrophilidae) new to Gloucestershire (v.c. 33) with notes on *Cercyon marinus* Thomson.**

In 1989 (*Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **125**: 150) I referred to the presence of *Cercyon marinus* Th. at Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire. The evidence for breeding at the site was the result of finding teneral imagines with a single mature individual. I now recognise that the teneral specimens of June 1987 represent *Cercyon bifenestratus* Küst., which is a major extension of the range of the species from the more southern counties of England (Allen 1970, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **106**: 5; Collier, 1987, *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **123**: 249.).

Since two superficially similar species can co-habit I am examining my limited evidence for their ecological preference.

Of the two, *C. marinus* is somewhat more aquatic and less tolerant of exposure. However, I know this species from only one site in Worcestershire, the Milestone Ground Pit at Broadway (Whitehead, in press). Here it was taken in March 1989 under a mat of dried algae 60cms up a shaded willow stump; in the April and May it was taken on floating logs with other beetles of similar persuasion. At Bishop's Cleeve, *C. marinus* has been taken under the foliage of a poolside grass, *Agrostis stolonifera* L., and under floating timber.